1: Meek E, G-5 (1925-1930) 1931
FF38 Katab FF38

of each village to catch a fish, however small, must hand it over to the priest, who has the fishes cooked and eats them ceremonially with his sons.

Among the Kaje the rain-making rites are also in the hands of a particular family. Material objects used are a monolith set in a grove (into which no one may enter with an axe), and a bamboo branch which has been used for measuring corpses before making a grave. In time of drought the people come to the head of this family and inquire if the drought is due to his negligence. So he takes the bamboo to the grove, and striking the monolith, says: "This custom I have received from my fathers and forefathers. May the Lord of the Heavens (Gwaza) grant that we may be blessed with rain. Let not the people die of hunger. They cling to me and say that I have hindered the rains. May Gwaza grant that the custom of my forefathers may not appear to be a worthless thing, and that I may be saved from the abuse of my kindred." This appeal is apparently addressed to the ghosts of dead ancestors, for, if rain follows, the priest immediately goes to the graves of the most remote ancestor and there offers thanks. There are also rites to prevent excessive rains while the corn is in the ear. To guard against this the rain-priest plants early a patch of digitaria, and with the new corn he makes a porridge and smears it on the monolith with the supplication that the crops may not be injured by an excess of rain.

Head-hunting.—The Katab, like all his neighbours, was a head-hunter, if by that term is meant the practice of severing the heads of enemies slain in battle and carrying them home in triumph to be deposited in the house of skulls. When he had killed his enemy he cut off his head, put it in his bag, and made off at full speed. And when he was free from pursuit one of his friends made him drink immediately a concoction of the bark of the locust and male shea trees, at the same time striking him on the chest and back with locust-bean leaves. These rites were designed to protect the warrior from assault by the dead man's ghost. A companion or relative [1] was then given charge of the head, for the slayer had to avoid all contact with his trophy. The friend passed a twig of the prosopis oblonga tree

[1] One had to exercise discretion in choosing the person to whom one gave the head, or he might claim it as his own.

1: Meek E, G-5 (1925-1930) 1931
FF38 Katab FF38

727 through the dead man's cheek and, covering the head up with leaves of the locust-bean tree,[1] deposited it in his bag. And then they hastened home. As they neared the town the companion gave the war-cry to announce his friend's success, the warrior himself maintaining silence and throughout the succeeding rites behaving with an excess of modesty. Festivities began at once. The men turned out in their war paint, the women yodelled and kept beating the captured head with branches of locust-beans. The slayer rode round on his horse,[2] brandishing a knife in his right hand (also a Ganawuri custom), while the 727 slayer's friend danced round holding the head. One of the first ● 751 duties of the head-getter on reaching home was to go to the house of the priest who had charge of the head-hunting rites,[3] 266 the Magajin Elenowum, and receive a further dose of protective medicine consisting of two mouthfuls of palm and mahogany oil and a small piece of the flesh of the skull. The Katab scorn the idea that they were ever cannibals, and this rite of eating a small piece of the flesh of the skull is of peculiar interest as proving that one purpose at least of cannibalism had the "religious" object of destroying the dead enemy's soul. The Ganawuri were admittedly cannibal, and the flesh of the skull was eaten by the priestly family, which had charge of the head-hunting rites, the rest of the body being eaten by the elders of the village. Among the Kagoro the protective medicine administered included a few drops of blood taken from the captured head. The warrior spent that night and the succeeding nights in the house of the priest and, covered in a cloth, was subjected to a process of fumigation by the smoke of the branches of certain trees. The intention again was to shake off pursuit by the dead man's soul. (Among the Berom a head-winner hid in a neighbouring village; and among the Chawai he hid in a friend's hut, while his body was anointed with a filthy smelling mixture of porcupine entrails, etc.) Next morning the Katab warrior, accompanied 727 by the local priest, had to go to Shokwa where the chief priestly family of the whole Katab tribe resides. The priest (Teowap)

[1] The Yergum block the nose, mouth, and ears of the severed head to prevent, apparently, the escape of the dead man's soul. Locust-bean leaves are also prominent in the Chawai, Piti, and Tangale head-hunting rites.

[2] Among the Kagoro the head-winner was carried round on the shoulders of his friends.

[3] Among the Piti, Chawai, Kagoro and Ganawuri the captured head was also immediately taken to the sacred grove or handed over to the Chief Priest.

1: Meek E, G-5 (1925-1930) 1931
FF38 Katab FF38

held up the head, and, putting a little digitaria porridge in his mouth, spat it out over the head, saying to the head-winner: "I thank you. Good fortune go with you, and may you get many more heads." On the same day they returned to their own town, where the festivities were continued for a further two days. On the fifth day the head-winner, the local priest, and friends took the head to the village of the warrior's maternal uncle or grandfather, who congratulated his nephew and slew a goat to celebrate the occasion. A feast was held and the uncle gave his nephew a hoe, bidding him use the iron of the hoe to fashion fresh spears and arrows that he might go and give further proof of his prowess. The nephew then returned to his home, where he was ever afterwards saluted as "mwaliak", the right hand being held up to him. The uncle buried the head in mud, and left it there until it was completely cleaned of all flesh.[1] He then took the head and a jar of beer to the nephew's village, where a feast, attended by warriors and old men, was held. The head-winner was once more given a protective draught, and his body was smeared with mahogany oil. The head was finally handed to the local priest who deposited it in the skull hut.[2] This hut had a small entrance, and the skulls were hung up inside on an ant-proof rafter of the roof. Every harvest the priest offered thanks, taking out the skulls, and spitting on them fragments of porridge made from the first-fruits of digitaria millet.

The noteworthy points about the rites are: (*a*) the use by the head-winner of protective medicines, and the avoidance of his own hut at night time; (*b*) the swallowing (without chewing) of a small piece of the flesh of the captured head; (*c*) the recognition of Shokwa as the priestly father of the tribe; (*d*) the important part played by the head-winner's maternal relatives; (3) the head-winner only considered the act of getting a head as a means of distinction; there was no underlying religious idea such as that the dead enemy would be his slave in a future life.

It may be added that the Zaria Hausa and Fulani never had sufficient control over the tribe to interfere with head-hunting.

[1] But at the conclusion of the feast the head was often boiled and cleaned by the Magajin Elenowum instead of being buried in mud whence it might be stolen.

[2] Some sections of the tribe had special "skull huts". In others the skulls were hung up in the Magajin Elenowum's hut.

1: Meek E, G-5 (1925-1930) 1931
FF38 Katab FF38

ascribed to witchcraft, and those who die of smallpox are believed to have been witches. Indeed, if a man is assailed by small-pox a bundle of grass is brought to him and he is asked to count out the number of those whom he has devoured. A full confession may save his life, but if he dies his guilt is proved, and his body is taken out of the hut by a hole made in the wall, his eyes are pierced (so that his disembodied spirit may never again be able to see anyone on whom he may fix his spells), and his corpse is buried without ceremony and without the customary lamentations. Most towns have their own leech (*obo*). The patient pays the cost of the medicine, and if he recovers bestows a gift on the leech. Cupping is practised in cases of fever; also inoculation for small-pox, the fluid being taken from the pustules of a man suffering from a mild attack and transfused into the blood of a healthy man, by means of a scratch made with a razor. For toothache wild olive oil is placed in the hollow of the decayed tooth. A red hot arrow is then inserted, and the tooth is split into pieces, which are extracted one by one. The Katab do not follow the Hausa custom of slitting the gums of a child. But the uvula is snipped off on naming day with the object of preventing attacks of quinsy or tonsilitis.

Death.—On the occurrence of death the women of the household give way to tears and lamentation, and men may also be seen weeping. All relatives are immediately informed, and messengers are dispatched to summon distant relatives such as the married sister of the deceased. The death of a chief (by chief is meant civil and not religious chief) is, however, kept secret for a period of seven days, none but the closest senior relatives, the grave-diggers, and the priests of Elenowum and Obwai being informed. Interment follows as soon as possible—in the evening if the deceased had died in the morning, in the morning if he had died during the previous evening. But a chief is always buried at night, for no one but those whose duty it is to bury him may look on his corpse. The body, covered with a cloth jumper, is wrapped in a mat of plaited palm fronds. (But a chief is buried in a gown.) Burial is, for commoners and chief, in the compound, and a fresh grave is used for each body. Old men and chiefs are buried underneath the entrance hut of the compound. Those who die of smallpox are denied burial rites, the corpse being wrapped in a mat and deposited in the bush.